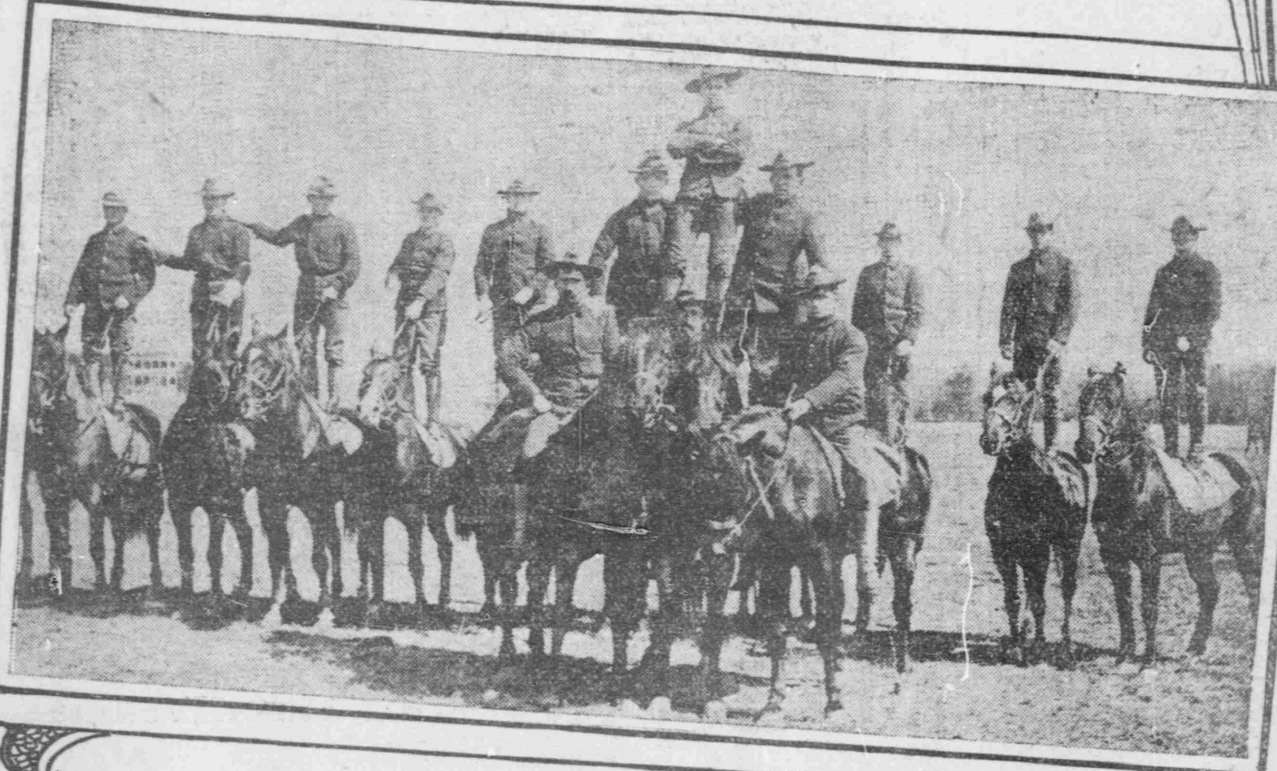


REMARKABLE FEATS OF SKILL BY FORT MYER MEN

A TROOP OF CENTAURS.

A LIVING PYRAMID.



Tremendous Obstacles Have Been Overcome in the Training and Drilling of Crack Representatives for the New York Show.

THOUGH hampered by the conditions of the service, if the Fifteenth Cavalry, four troops of which are now quartered at Fort Myer, does not put up as good an exhibition drill as its predecessor, the Second, at the annual tournament at Madison Square Garden, New York, of the Military Athletic League, to be held the week beginning May 2, it will not be the fault of Capt. F. J. Koester and Lieutenants Burnett and Cameron, who have the training of the men to participate.

Though there is every reason to believe that the drill which will be put on in New York on the date mentioned will be equal in every respect, if not superior in many, to any ever exhibited, this result will have been accomplished under remarkably adverse circumstances. To begin with, the Fifteenth is just home from "the islands," where it was engaged in actual service, and had no time for fancy stunts, however valuable these latter may be. Then, again, the old members of the regiment, who were such consummate horsemen that no trick riding was too difficult for their accomplishment, were, almost to a man, discharged, by reason of the expiration of their enlistments in February, and practically none have re-enlisted to date. Prior to their discharge, however, the men gave every indication of their intention to re-enlist, so that, when the order was received from the general commanding the Department of the East, in December, for the selection of a composite troop of cavalry, and a squad of artillery, to participate in the tournament, teams were made up from the old men of the troops, who were drilled into perfection of movement in a number of very difficult feats of horsemanship. When the time came for their discharge, however, these men, one and all, left for good, and with them went the trained composite troop composed of them.

Broke in Raw Men.

There was but one thing to do—break in teams from the new men. Captain Koester called Lieutenants Burnett and Cameron in consultation, and together they faced the situation. It was now the first of March, and nothing but a bunch of raw men on which to work. Add to this the superb record left by the Second Cavalry, the pride of the Fifteenth, and the imperative necessity of maintaining the honor of the cavalry arm of the service and you will see what a stupendous task was ahead of these men.

For it is not the work of a holiday to learn or teach riding, even of the plain, unshowy, straightaway service kind. Cavalrymen reckon that it takes two years to teach a man the proper seat and carriage and how to handle his horse—in other words, how to ride. Here was the greater necessity of teaching the fanciest styles of riding—such as is not to be seen even in circus rings or Wild West shows, or on the Indian plains or cattle fields—and all within the space of a few weeks, and with men, some of whom, perhaps, never sat a horse. Truly the task was Herculean. How well it has been accomplished—with what consummate skill the raw recruits have been whipped into shape, and with what aptitude the troopers have assimilated instruction, can be realized only by watching them at their daily drills.

It is the eighth annual tournament of the Military Athletic League, which is to be held in the Madison Square Garden the first week in May. This league is under the auspices of the National

Guard of the State of New York, Col. George R. Dyer, of the Twelfth Regiment, being at its head. The annual tournament is one of the most popular events in New York, enjoying the patronage of the best society people and an attendance which packs the spacious Madison Square Garden.

Work of the League.

For a number of years this league has enjoyed the sanction and approval of the War Department, which sends representative squads and troops from the various branches of the service, to participate in the exercises.

The reason for this official approval is explained as of a dual character. In the first place, the work done, while not such as is required in actual service, is yet of a nature to improve the men, especially by putting them on their mettle, inciting competition in feats of a daring and hazardous character, and affording those capable of winning a place on a squad or composite troop a pleasant outing, and the delights of standing for their comrades in those stunts which win popular applause. Another benefit seen by the army in this tournament is that it is one of the few methods whereby the general public can be made acquainted with what can be and is accomplished in the ranks.

It is for reasons such as these that the greatest interest is always manifested by the heads of the army in the New York show. At last year's tournament the Secretary of War, the Hon. Elihu Root, opened the military features, and was escorted to his place on the reviewing stand by the full corps of cadets of the Military Academy of West Point, which then gave an exhibition drill. This is the first time in the history of the country that the cadets of the Academy have ever been seen at a military tournament, and the fourth time in twenty-five years that they have entered New York as a body. Besides Secretary Root a number of distinguished generals were in attendance, and took nightly turns in reviewing the troops and detachments.

The tournament lasts one week, with nightly performances and matinees. The program consists in competitive athletic feats, participated in by representatives of the National Guard and various military schools. Following this comes the military exhibition proper, and it is in this part of the program that the representatives of the Fifteenth Cavalry and Fourth Artillery participate.

Training the Men.

When, in December last, Col. W. M. Wallace, commanding the Fifteenth Cavalry, received orders to send to the league tournament a composite troop of horse, and a detachment of artillery, he transmitted the orders to Captains Koester and Foote, respectively. Captain Koester in turn intrusted the training of the two squads composing the troop to Lieutenants Burnett and Cameron, and on them devolved the work of the whipping in of the men into teams with a full repertoire of exhibition stunts. As has been mentioned, they had to do their work twice, as, just when they had their respective squads well trained, the men composing them were discharged, and they had to start all over with new material. It is conceded by their superior officers that great credit attaches both to the junior officers and to the men under their command for the degree of proficiency already obtained, and the promise of startling and clever performances at New York in May.

Captain Foote has not been hampered to such an extent by reason of the discharge of his men, and has had the opportunity to work up a feature never before exhibited in a drill hall in this country—the horse artillery. Twice in the history of the United States has horse artillery been employed in actual service—during the Mexican and civil wars. It is now regarded as certain by army men that it will again take its place in the regular formations, as it will be necessary to keep pace with the cavalry arm. The horse artillery, as its name indicates, is the cavalry branch of artillery. In ordinary mounted artillery, the cannoneers ride either on the limber boxes, or on the axle seats; in the horse artillery, they ride on horses behind the gun. From a service point of view this means a lighter and more active form of artillery, such as can keep pace with the rapid movements of cavalry; from the point of view of the indoor show, it means a more spectacular style of the always attractive heavy-gun drill.

Some Artillery Stunts.

The drills take place in the large riding hall of the fort. In the case of the saddle and bareback squads of the cavalry troops they are of daily occurrence in the morning. On Fridays, exhibition drills are given, for the benefit of invited friends of the officers, and would be for the general public to view, were it not that there is practically no accommodation for the public—a defect now being remedied by an addition to one end of the hall. Before the men go to New York, and after they have become more proficient and have donned the handsome new uniform, they will be inspected by Secretary of War Taft and the officers of the General Staff.

The things done with and by the men, horses, and guns, is none short of remarkable. Take any one drill—for instance the mounted artillery drill. The three guns are hauled into the hall at a gallop, the cannoneers riding behind furnishing a striking picture. After a round of the hall, the cannoneers riding three abreast, the guns circle in one direction, and the cannoneers in the opposite. Double figures eight, and other intricate devices are executed, when the guns are fired in line. The skill shown in the handling of the heavy guns in such close quarters, is still further exercised, when they are deployed in echelon, so that they can be fired in every direction without shifting positions, and still more so when three arches are brought into the arena, and the men and guns deployed through them with the narrowest margin of movement. In the final act, men and guns are formed in a solid line, at one end of the hall. There are some thirty-five men employed in this drill. Captain Foote is assisted by Lieutenant Weisel.

The Musical March.

The composite cavalry troop is divided into the saddle squad, under Lieutenant Cameron, and the bareback squad, under Lieutenant Burnett. The former is composed of thirty men, the latter of twenty. The saddle squad goes through a musical march, side stepping, backing, and performing innumerable figures, all to the time of music. Precision and grace of movement are the striking characteristics of the work of this squad, the most spectacular stunts being the crossed stirrup act, when the men stand in the stirrups shortened by being thrown across the saddle, and the charge at full speed, sabers drawn, down the hall. This squad is composed of the following troopers, selected from Troops E, F, G, and H, Fifteenth Cavalry: First Sergeant McCay, Sergeants Weaver, Hall, Hyllon, Swope, and Cox; Corporals Stevens, Lewis, Smith, Ryan, Ray, Berder, Feland and Young; Farrier Huddy; Saddlers Dupree and Mythen; Wagoner Dorenberg; Privates Range, Bassett, Cooper, Kirchenebrod,

Middleton, Baldwin, Thompson, and Harpole, and Trumpeter Egner.

Perhaps the greatest interest will be taken, however, in the work of the bareback squad, which is, from the first to the last, spectacular, and as full of interest as the performance of any circus ring, and indicates some of the fine points of horsemanship which Uncle Sam teaches his riders in blue or olive drab. Nowhere in the world is such fancy riding accomplished so smoothly.

The bareback squad is composed of Troopers Paule, Mason, Walker, Woolstencroft, Green, Pettigrew, Montgomery, Shaw, Campbell, Morris, Montgomerie, Hughes, Riordan, Temple, King, Douglass, Welse, Walsh, Bourke, and Langland, selected from Troops E, F, G, and H, Fifteenth Cavalry.

The men enter the ring in single file at a trot. After one round seated on

the bare back of the horse, they rise to their feet and ride around standing. Next, at the word of command from Lieutenant Burnett, the men ride across the center of the hall at a gallop, and as they reach the center they jump to the ground and back into their seats, the horses still at a gallop.

Then they form twos, and one man hands the reins of his horse to his comrade, folds his arms, and in this position jumps from his horse, and, with scarcely perceptible pause, springs clear over his horse on to that of his partner. Again this is done, and this time he lights on his partner's horse with his back to that of the other man, so that one is facing the horse's head, the other his tail. These tricks are then repeated with a hurdle, the men making their leaps as the hurdle is crossed. Again

the program is gone through, this time with three instead of two horses.

The hippodrome formations are very striking, and are sure to win rounds of applause in New York. A man rides first two, then three, then four horses, standing, his feet on the outer horses. When half a dozen of these teams are circling round the hall, the effect is highly spectacular.

The pyramid work attempted by the Fifteenth is superior to any ever tried before. First two men stand on their horses, and a third stands on their shoulders. Then three horses are used, their riders standing, two men on their shoulders, and a sixth on the shoulders of the latter. Finally four horses are used, which requires ten men, who by this time are well up in the air. This is a larger pyramid than ever before attempted.

The final act, and one which reflects the greatest credit to the horses themselves, is where, at word of command, all the horses lie down, while the men turn somersaults and cut all kinds of capers over their prostrate bodies. At the word of command, again, they all rise. Altogether this is the most difficult and impressive feat.

Such are some of the things attempted, the full list of which would take too much time and space. There is little doubt of the impression which their performance will create in New York.

This tournament is a money-making affair, and the profits accruing are divided among the participants for use in equipping the gymnasiums. The Fort Myer gymnasium received an appropriation from this source last year.

BUILT FOR SPEED.

LOCAL conditions and their sometimes powerful effect on Congressional elections were being discussed in the Democratic cloak room of the House. Representative Maynard of Virginia spoke up:

"These local questions and the difficulty of accounting for them remind me of an incident that happened at a county fair on the Eastern Shore of Virginia not long ago. A man who breeds very fine hogs, with which he is accustomed to take prizes at many of the larger fairs in Maryland and Virginia, sent some of his prize-winners to this county fair. He cared nothing for the prize money, but wanted to advertise his business in that section of the State. He did not reach the fair grounds himself until a few hours after the prizes had been awarded. He wandered over to the hog pens, and, much to his surprise, found the blue ribbons tied to the tails of scraggy swine of the 'razor-back' variety, while the curly caudal appendages of his fat, clean, and well-curried pigs were unadorned. He was puzzled. Going over to the judges' stand, he said:

"Gentlemen, I am not kicking on the awards, because I merely brought my hogs here for advertisement, but I know by what mental process you arrived at the conclusion that those razor-backed, chisel-headed hogs with the blue ribbons on their tails are better than mine."

MARTHA WASHINGTON'S BIBLES

MEMBERS of the family of Gen. Robert E. Lee are endeavoring, it is said, to regain possession of "the Custis family Bible," which Martha Washington used in her morning devotions, and which contains the birth and death records of many of America's famous men.

According to a report from Philadelphia, this Bible bears the London imprint of Charles Bell, 1702—Charles Bell is probably meant—and contains the entries of the births of Fanny Parke Custis, September 13, 1710; and of Daniel Parke Custis, October 13, 1711. There are also the records of the marriage of Daniel and Martha Custis and the births of their various children, and on the page at the end of the New Testament is the birth record of George W. P. Custis, the adopted son of George Washington.

This is not the only Martha Washington Bible now in existence, for Mr. Gunther, of Chicago, owns the \$5,000 Oxford Bible of 1789, which was sold for a much smaller sum at one of the Philadelphia Washington sales in 1892 to George D. Smith and A. J. Bowden, the New York dealers, and resold by them to the Western collector for the amount named.

This interesting volume contains the dated autograph of Martha Washington in three places, showing that it came into her possession in 1789. The five preliminary blank leaves are occupied with the family record of Lawrence Lewis, who married Washington's

adopted daughter, Nellie Parke Custis. The first entry is:

Lawrence Lewis, born 4th April, 1767. Nellie Parke Custis, born 21st March, 1779. Married at Mount Vernon, On Friday, 23rd Feb., 1799, in the presence of Genl. & Mrs. Martha Washington.

The volume is a thick quarto, bound in plain calf, and covered, probably by Martha Washington herself, with strong unbleached linen cloth, apparently of household manufacture. The three places where her signature occurs are on the title page of the Old Testament, just above the imprint, on the leaf of dedication to King James, and on the title page of the New Testament.

The pedigree of the Gunther copy is complete, and the various ownerships are well known. The pedigree of the Lee copy seems to be faulty.

This Bible appears to have been mislaid by General Lee's family in moving from their home at Arlington in 1861. Recently Miss Mary Lee, a daughter of Robert E. Lee, while visiting Philadelphia, learned that the Bible was owned by George W. Kendrick, Jr., of that city.

Mr. Kendrick, who bought it twenty-two years ago from a man named Stein, who has since died, declines to return the Bible, and it seems likely that the question of ownership will be taken into court. The father of this Mr. Stein was a soldier of the Union army and is thought to have "bought the book from a sutler, who had previously purchased it from a soldier who had found it in the house at Arlington."

As it possesses greater family interest this Bible would doubtless sell for a larger sum than the Gunther copy.

THE POLITICAL CENTER.

WHILE the geographical center of population in the United States has been steadily moving westward from near Baltimore in 1790, to Clarkburg, W. Va., in 1840, and Columbus, Ind., in 1890 and 1900, the political center of population has been gradually steered in the East and is now within a few miles of the New York city hall.

Instead of gradually moving westward with the course of population, the political center has been veering steadily to the northeast. More than half a century ago Pennsylvania, wholly to the west of New York city, was considered the determining one of the doubtful States, and derived as such the name which for a long time after it bore of the Keystone State.

For many years the importance of Ohio was so great in political affairs as to give Ohio men a distinction which they long enjoyed and effectively utilized. Following the close of the Civil War and of the period of reconstruction, Indiana was accepted by both political parties as the storm center, and it was there that the expression "hoasters in blocks of steel" originated. Indiana had the Republican nomination for Vice President in 1888, the Democratic nomination for Vice President in 1896, and the Republican nomination for President in 1888 and 1892—decidedly more than its quota of political honors. New York city has now become the nucleus of political determination in the United States. Upon the size of its Democratic majority depends the electoral vote of the State of New York, and upon the influences predominating in New York depend the results in New Jersey and Connecticut.

The influence of New York in the Middle West and in the South is now very much greater than at any previous period.